

Ash NDP Response to Examiner's query

Nutrient neutrality to be added around para 148-150 either as additional paragraphs or as a new sub-section.

Source Ash Habitat Regulations Assessment

The water environment within the Stour Catchment is one of the most important for water dependent wildlife in the UK. There is sound evidence that high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous input into this environment is causing eutrophication to the Stour European sites.

(Eutrophication is an enrichment of water by nutrients that causes structural changes to the ecosystem such as: increased production of algae and aquatic plants, depletion of fish species and general reduction in water quality that has an impact upon the eco-system.)

It is thought that the main sources of these nutrients are wastewater from housing developments and agricultural sources.

Increasing housing development within the Parish of Ash could further contribute to nutrient input into the European sites.

Currently local wastewater treatment plants are under investigation with regard to their impact on the Stodmarsh European sites. The report is due to be published in 2022 by the Environment Agency Water Industry National Environment Program (WINEP).

Due to the uncertainty of the impact on the Stour catchment area of the new residential developments, all developments must ensure they achieve nutrient neutrality (para 3.9 Ash Habitats Regulation Assessment) using the standard metrics to calculate the impacts. Developments must secure agreement measures with the water treatment providers to maintain and increase nitrogen/phosphorus offsetting within the catchment area.